

## **What Makes a Building a Home?**

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Growing up, I never felt comfortable anywhere. I never knew what it felt like to be “home” per se. I was always worried about doing something wrong, or not being good enough, and rarely talked. This last year, however, I found a place where I feel welcome, and I am glad to consider it a home. A home, at least in my eyes, should be a place where you feel welcome and relaxed, where there are other people who truly care about you, and a home is obvious when you feel positive anxiety to leave.

To find a true home is a privilege, and I was only able to find it through a bunch of seemingly disconnected and lucky events. Had I not joined the musical in high school, had I not decided to join my friend to go to church on a whim, had I not continued going to Church after my friend started missing church for work, I likely would not have found my home. J. Crow states in *Jayber Crow*, “I began to take for granted that I was somewhere, and somewhere that I knew, but I never quite felt that I was somewhere I wanted to be.” (Berry, 2000, P. 36). I relate to this quote, because I never felt like I wanted to be at my house, but I took for granted that I had a house which I knew, even though I was not as happy as I could be. It was not until I pushed my boundaries that I found my home. The place I consider home is only 20 minutes from the house where I have lived in for most of my life. The home looks and feels very rural and homey. It is on top of a hill, overlooking a farm, with two stories and a large barn close by. The house and barn are both old, because of this you can hear every step that someone takes. This home has given me a chance to grow and thrive by letting me be me. Being in this home allowed me to talk openly and figure out more about what I want in life, and these goals have helped me thrive.

This home is also filled with my “family”, who are actually my closest friend’s family and over the course of last year have essentially adopted me into their family. I go over every Sunday after church and wish I could go over more, especially with my move-in date for college getting closer. My new family is the majority of what makes this place my home, they bring me joy whenever they are around and push me to be the best that I can. I think the reason I thrived after finding this home is because I always felt like I had people supporting me who would be proud of me if I did my best. This genuine support pushed me to do my best, because I wanted to make them proud. I also thrived there because of the different perspectives. My biological family who I grew up around is very conservative. My non-blood family at this home are more liberal and free-thinking, and being able to hear different opinions helped me think more and decide for myself. In fact I would not have even heard about EMU without them. The first time the feelings that I mattered to them set in was when they offered to bring along to visit EMU. After the campus visit, we hiked one of the trails in the nearby mountains. At the end of the trail they had me stand in their family picture with the other kids, which was when I realized that they considered me part of the family. I am so incredibly grateful for being allowed into their family, and I do not know where I would be without them.

Finally, I believe that what makes a home is the anxiety to leave. Now, this may sound negative at first, however, I do not mean anxiety caused by pressure to stay or anxiety instilled by controlling figures, but anxiety that is mixed with excitement caused by pushing your boundaries. It is anxiety similar to what I imagine a baby bird feels when they are pushed out of the nest for the first time to fly. This kind of anxiety is what I feel when looking forward to moving into my dorm at EMU. I feel anxious about what will change when I am gone, and

anxious that I might not be welcome, even though my common sense tells me otherwise, yet excited that I will be able to return to my home more knowledgeable and hopefully a better person. My relationship with my home will be very long distance, however, my “mom” at the home has already told me to try and text everyday so she knows how I am doing at EMU, so I expect that home might not feel as far away once I settle in.

Home is a place that changes from person to person. Home can be a place of comfort, a university campus where students lived for four years, or a place where someone used to live. The way I view home, however, is a set of emotions that I feel, which are based around comfort and joy. These emotions are often hard to find, which is why I am eternally grateful to have found a home when I did.

**(Word Count: 965).**

## Reference

Berry, W. (2001). *Jayber Crow: The life story of Jayber Crow, barber, of the Port William membership, as written by himself*. Thorndike, Me.: Thorndike Press.